

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

House Enrolled Act 1059 requires that all high school U.S. History courses include a section on the Holocaust. This legislation was inspired by Eva Kor, an Auschwitz survivor who, alongside her twin sister, was subjected to Nazi experiments on multiple births. Kor is a proud Hoosier who operates the CANDLES Holocaust Memorial Museum in Terre Haute.

CHILDREN'S ISSUES

House Enrolled Act 1381 specifies situations that will be legally considered child abuse or neglect. House Enrolled Act 1778 closes a loophole in state law that restricts the Department of Child Services and other appropriate law enforcement agencies from conducting child abuse investigations on child care ministries and certain other child care providers.

Senate Enrolled Act 311 gives Indiana's courts and the Department of Child Services the authority to ensure that abused children are allowed to remain in their homes. Whenever possible, the abuser will be removed from the household rather than the child. House Enrolled Act 1406 will assist kinship caregivers, relatives or non-relatives who have a bond with a child and provide care in a parent's place.

Gov. Mitch Daniels and Rep. Sheila Klinker in the House Chamber discussing the Indiana Checkup Plan.

FIREWORK SAFETY

State lawmakers gave Indiana communities greater control over the use of fireworks. The Local Government Committee, of which I am the Vice Chair, worked on Senate Enrolled Act 9, which guarantees Hoosiers the right to use fireworks each year from June 29 through July 9 and again on December 31, but now other restrictions may be imposed during the remainder of the year through decisions at the local level. A measure passed during a previous legislative session gave Hoosiers nearly an unlimited ability to shoot off fireworks, which generated many complaints from homeowners and public safety officials.

HEALTH CARE FOR HOOSIERS

Indiana Checkup Plan

House Democrats have long fought to make health care coverage available to uninsured Hoosiers and more affordable to working families struggling with ever-rising insurance costs. Through the passage of the Indiana Checkup Plan contained in House Enrolled Act 1678, we have taken major steps toward these goals.

Thousands of uninsured Hoosiers will gain access to health coverage through the Indiana Checkup Plan. The various components of this plan are funded by an increase in the state's cigarette tax. Raising this tax will also help convince many to stop smoking and will prevent thousands of youth from ever starting.

I am pleased that we were able to expand the Indiana Checkup Plan beyond the Governor's original proposal. Our legislation will also provide tax credits to businesses that begin offering employees health insurance and wellness programs. We were also able to extend health care coverage to thousands of previously uninsured children and expectant mothers.

The Indiana Checkup Plan will:

- Cover up to 132,000 uninsured working Hoosiers
- Expand the CHIP program to cover up to 40,000 more Hoosier children
- Extend health coverage to more than 15,000 expectant mothers
- Provide small businesses tax credits for offering employees weight loss and smoking cessation programs
- Establish tax credits for employers who provide health insurance plans

The 44 Cents Cigarette Tax Distribution:

- 33 cents: first \$11 million to fund immunizations for children
- 2 cents: to an increase in physician reimbursement
- 1 cent: to an increase in dental reimbursement
- 5 cents: to other health initiatives
- 3 cents: to employer's Section 125 plan



**Representative
Sheila Klinker**

Needs Your Opinion

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☒ **A Balanced Budget**
Schools Receive
Additional Funding



☒ **Property Tax Relief**
Property Owners Will
See Relief For 2007



☒ **Affordable Health Care**
Thousands of Hoosiers
to Receive Coverage



2007 Session Report

Helping Hoosier Families

Bipartisan Budget Helps Hoosier Families

Legislators worked together to approve a balanced, bipartisan state budget that provides **increased funding for our schools and health care services while providing \$550 million in property tax relief.**

I was fortunate to serve as an advisor to the Budget Conference Committee and also to serve as the Chair of the Ways and Means Higher Education Subcommittee on this balanced budget that will help Hoosier citizens.

The new state budget that takes effect on July 1 provides almost a **4 percent average increase in state support for public schools** in each of the next two years and increases in state funding for our colleges and universities of more than 4.5 percent during that time. **The budget also funds new life science initiatives for Indiana University and Purdue University.** Purdue will receive \$5 million during the second year of the biennium for this program.

The budget also **reduces 2007 property taxes by \$300 million in the form of a refund and also increases homestead credits by \$250 million next year.** In addition, the budget makes sure the state pays back money owed in delayed payments to universities and local units of government.

I advocated for and was pleased the budget included **\$2.9 million per year for the Guardian ad Litem/Court Appointed Special Advocate program,** \$250,000 per year for the Best Buddies program and \$100,000 per year for the Native American Indian Affairs Commission. The budget also provides funding to clean up Lake Shafer and Lake Freeman, and to repair the 130-year-old wrought iron fence surrounding the historic Tippecanoe Battlefield.

Additionally, the budget doubles funding for health care for Hoosiers on lower incomes and provides a \$97 million over two years for the CHOICE home health care program. It also funds additional caseworkers for child services, designates more than **\$1 billion for major highway construction projects,** \$30 million for community health clinics and \$10 million for mental health centers.

Schools Benefit from State Budget

Indiana's schoolchildren are big winners with the new state budget approved in the 2007 session.

My number one goal this past session was to restore funding to schools. I am pleased that the House Ways and Means Committee was able to work with the Senate to boost funding for K-12 education by almost 4% each year of the biennium.

In addition to the significant school formula increases, the new budget contains the first substantial commitment to bringing voluntary full-day kindergarten to all of



Indiana. Full-day kindergarten has been a long-time priority for House Democrats, and the budget bill provides more than \$90 million to expand this critical early education program over the next two years.



Rep. Klinker discusses budget issues with Ways and Means Chairman Rep. William Crawford (D-Indianapolis).

Rep. Klinker's 2007 Legislation

HOUSE BILLS

HB 1452—Insurance producers and policy forms. This bill became the primary insurance bill for the session and the contents of several other bills were added to it. This bill now includes 1) funding for the Insurance Department; 2) a change to agency certification requirements that returns the renewal time to two years, rather than four; 3) the establishment of the insurance education scholarship fund to be administered by the State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana; 4) provisions to allow the department of insurance to set the amount charged for copies of medical records; 5) a method for dealing with the problem of port of entry and commercial deregulation; and 6) the hiring of an internal actuary for the Insurance Department.

HB 1456—Utility receipts tax. Exempts gross receipts derived from the sale of utility services between members of a controlled group of corporations or an affiliated group from the utility tax receipts. This bill helped companies such as Alcoa maintain their economic vitality.

HB 1457—Birth problems registry. Continues the birth problems registry by repealing a provision that would have abolished the registry as of July 1, 2007. The bill also establishes a commission to develop an intervention and treatment plan for prenatal substance abusers and to look at existing programs to help mothers and babies. The bill also requires mobile health units to register with the Department of Health.

HB 1820—Additional funding for the Arts. The bill, which provides \$1.25 million of funding for the Arts, was written into the final state budget.

HB 1821—Licensure for occupational therapists. Requires that practicing occupational therapists become licensed through a nationally-recognized exam designed by the Occupational Therapy Committee and the Medical Licensing Board. It also solves a problem that existed on psychological testing and how these tests would be administered (RTL). Licensed occupational therapists will not only have to take the initial licensing test, but also must meet continuing competency requirement tests for their renewals.

SENATE BILLS

Rep. Klinker was the House sponsor

SB 38—Purchases from persons with disabilities. Provides guidelines for governmental bodies when buying goods and services from those with disabilities.

SB 320—Massage therapists certification. Establishes the state board of massage therapy to certify massage therapists.

SB 312—Local water corporations. Allows small towns to bypass the utility regulatory commission for certain purposes that apply to a conservancy district.

Rep. Klinker Supports Property Tax Relief

I have been listening to your concerns about rising local property taxes and was committed to taking action in 2007. Experts are now predicting that the average homeowner's property taxes will increase by more than 20% this year.

To help soften the impact of the rising property tax burden, I supported legislation that provides **\$550 million in additional property tax relief over the next two years.** Homeowners will benefit from \$300 million in increased 2007 Homestead Credits in the form of a rebate sent later this year. In 2008, another \$250 million worth of Homestead Credits will be applied directly to tax bills. Other legislation I supported increases the exemption for the house you live in from \$35,000 to \$45,000 in 2008.



Rep. Klinker presents Purdue President Martin Jischke with a gift upon his retirement.

In addition, **lawmakers established a more permanent, long-term framework for reducing Indiana local government's reliance on property taxes.** Local officials will gain flexibility to both cut property taxes and pay for critical public safety services like police and fire protection.

Another component of property tax-related reform was the creation of county oversight boards to address the rising costs of school and local government construction. These boards will help better control and prioritize capital projects in each community.

I feel confident that in addition to substantial short-term relief, we have made great strides in creating a more fair and equitable tax system that relies less on property taxes.

A Guide to the Property Tax Rebate

Why a Rebate Check?

The state will not collect the money earmarked for increased 2007 Homestead Credits until November, so a rebate is the best way to provide homeowners this tax relief.



Will I Receive a Rebate?

All homeowners will automatically receive one unless they are delinquent on taxes.

When Will I Receive the Rebate?

All eligible taxpayers should receive a check in late 2007 or early 2008. Some homeowners who pay their property taxes through escrow may have their rebate sent directly to their escrow agent or lender.

Who Will Issue the Rebate?

The state will transfer the funds for the rebate to your county government, and county officials will calculate your rebate and mail a check.

Rep. Klinker Participates as House Honors Super Bowl Champion Colts



Representatives Address Energy Issues

Legislators established tax incentives to spur development of the next generation of alternative fuels and fuel-efficient vehicles right here in Indiana. Other measures were enacted to increase use of ethanol or "E85" fuel. Given that "E85" is derived from corn, Indiana's agricultural sector should benefit from wider use while helping Hoosiers become more energy independent.